

Executive Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 29 May 2008

Present: Councillor Peter Goldsworthy (Executive Leader in the Chair), Councillor Pat Case (Deputy Leader of the Council) and Councillors Alan Cullens, Peter Malpas and John Walker

Also in attendance:

Lead Members: Councillors Rosemary Russell (Lead Member for Health and Older People) and Iris Smith (Lead Member for Licensing)

Other Members: Councillors Dennis Edgerley, Marie Gray, Laura Lennox, Adrian Lowe, June Molyneaux, Ralph Snape and Peter Wilson

08.EC.31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member (Neighbourhoods)).

08.EC.32 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any of the Executive Members on any of the agenda items.

08.EC.33 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 27 March 2008 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Executive Leader.

08.EC.34 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There had been no requests from any member of the public to speak at the meeting on any of the agenda items.

08.EC.35 FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Cabinet received the Council's June Forward Plan, which set out details of the potential key decisions to be made by the Executive Cabinet or individual Executive Members during the four month period commencing 1 June 2008.

Decision made:

That the June Forward Plan, as now presented, be noted.

08.EC.36 RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY REPORTS ON ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY GAINS

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) and the Corporate Director for Human Resources and Operational Development submitted a report on the outcome of a further review of the findings and recommendations of the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel's inquiries into (a) Absence Management and (b) Efficiency Gains, which had been presented to the last meeting of the Executive Cabinet on 27 March 2008.

The Executive Cabinet thanked the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate and Customer Panel for their efforts and input into the two inquiries

which were expected to effect further improvements to the Council's performance in the two areas.

The Executive was also proposing to endorse the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation to approve and adopt the two Inquiries' reports' recommendations, subject to the minor revision of one of the recommendations in the Efficiency Gains report in order to allow investigation into the extent to which Members might be included in the health and well-being initiative provided for Council staff, other than its immediate implementation.

An appendix to the report outlined the Executive's detailed response to each of the two Inquiries' reports' recommendations, highlighting the actions that had either already been instigated or were currently being pursued by the Officers.

Decision taken:

That the responses to the former Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel's reports on its inquiries into (a) Absence Management and (b) Efficiency Gains throughout the Authority, as outlined in the appendix to the submitted report, be endorsed and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision:

The Executive Cabinet's endorsement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations will strengthen the good practices already in place across the Council and will further enhance the Authority's performance.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.37 CHORLEY'S PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) gave a short presentation to highlight the Council's commendable journey of performance improvement over the past three years in advance of the impending Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council during the week commencing 16 June 2008.

The presentation confirmed the Authority's steady year on year improvement in both the number of improved or consistent Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) (which now equated to 85% of the total BPVIs monitored) and the number of BVPIs in the top national quartile. The statistics demonstrated the Authority's sustained excellence in areas such as the number of recorded crimes and recycling, where the Council's performance had remained in the top quartile for a number of years.

Recent surveys had revealed the success of recent efforts to reverse the reduction in the level of public satisfaction with the Council services since 2005, which showed that the increased percentage of public satisfaction with the Council overall was now included in the top quartile.

Improvements were also evident in many areas which, while not being subject to the BVPI regime, impacted on the Council's corporate priorities (eg steadily increasing visits to All Seasons Leisure Centre and the town centre, an increase in the number of new businesses being established in the Borough and a substantial reduction in the number of complaints lodged with the Ombudsman).

The presentation also highlighted the substantial number of awards and commendations achieved by the authority in recognition of its continuing enhanced

performance and innovations (including the recent Beacon Award for transforming services through 'Citizen Engagement and Empowerment'), which were a testament to Chorley's growing reputation with other local and national bodies.

The Assistant Chief Executive's presentation had highlighted the impressive improvement and sustainment of the Council's performance over the past three years, which had been achieved through the most efficient use of limited resources.

The officer's address included a reference to the issues on which the Council would now be focussing (eg the introduction of neighbourhood performance management and delivery of the Lancashire Local Area Agreement and partners), with a view to the Authority's performance being even further enhanced.

The Executive Cabinet acknowledged the Council's laudable achievements over the past three years and the Executive Leader thanked the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) for her informative address.

08.EC.38 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - FOURTH QUARTER OF 2007/08

The Executive Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) which set out and reviewed the Authority's performance in the delivery of the key projects and measures in the Corporate Strategy and against national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) during the fourth quarter of 2007/08 ending on 31 March 2008.

The report revealed an overall commendable performance in the delivery of the refreshed Corporate Strategy's key projects, with 81% of the projects either having been completed or progressing on or ahead of plan. The report explained the reasons for six projects being currently behind schedule, but indicating that the schemes were likely to be completed in the near future.

In addition, the report confirmed a good overall BVPI performance, with an increased 46% of indicators in the top quartile nationally, and 70% of indicators achieving their targets. 85% of the indicators had shown an improved or consistent performance over the quarter period, which compared favourably with a percentage of national District Councils' improving BVPIs of around 55%.

A note setting out the comments and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on three of the Corporate Strategy's key projects was tabled and presented by the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Dennis Edgerley. The note, in particular, comments as follows:

- Vulnerable Families Project

The Committee had expressed concern at the delay in the delivery of the project and had requested to be advised of the number of families identified for assistance.

In response, the Executive Member for Policy and Performance confirmed that a Project Co-ordinator had now been appointed and that, whilst individual families targeted for support would not be identified, the project could now be progressed.

- Developing a Community Plan for Buckshaw

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed concern at the delay in developing a Community Plan for Buckshaw, highlighting the use of Section 106 monies as an issue.

In reply, the Executive Leader accepted the Committee's concern at the delay and confirmed that some of the Section 106 monies had been diverted towards the funding of the Eaves Green Link Road.

- Improving the Green Corridor (Astley Park)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested (i) to be informed of any proposal to omit the Adventure Playground element from the Astley Park scheme due to funding; and (ii) the investigation of alternative funding sources (including the County Council's 'Play Builder Starter Grant' scheme, to enable the key part of the Council's Play Strategy to be implemented.

In response, the Executive Leader accepted the Committee's concerns and confirmed that all available funding sources would be pursued.

Decisions made:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the key project to 'produce an action plan for the Community Forum areas' be renamed the more relevant 'Develop Neighbourhood Action Plans'.

Reason for decisions:

The introduction of the new neighbourhood working arrangements obviates the need for further Community Forums. Consequently, it is logical for the key project requiring the production of Community Forum action plans to be amended to require the development of neighbourhood action plans.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.39 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ASSOCIATED SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a joint report of the Corporate Director (Business) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) seeking approval to the adoption of a draft Climate Change Strategy and associated Sustainable Procurement Policy.

The report and strategy highlighted the significance of climate change issues and the subsequent need for the Council to ensure that practices and initiatives aimed at adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change are embedded in all areas of the Council's work and activities.

The Climate Change Strategy brought together in a coherent and consistent manner current good practice by putting forward a number of potential actions aimed at reducing the Council's carbon emissions and costs and promoting good practice. The action plan would need to be examined, costed and developed further before submission to the Executive Cabinet.

The adoption of the associated Sustainable Procurement Policy and Action Plan aimed to recognise the Council's vital role in furthering sustainable development through its procurement of building goods and services by good practice methods.

In response to a Members' comment, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Local Strategic Partnership was also examining ways of assisting local businesses to reduce their carbon footprint.

Decisions made:

1. That the Climate Change Strategy, as now presented, be approved and adopted and that the related programme of actions be approved in principle.
2. That the associated Sustainable Procurement Policy be adopted to implement the actions contained in the Flexible Framework Action Plan to be contained as an appendix to the Climate Change Strategy.

Reason for decisions:

The Climate Change Strategy and associated actions represent Chorley Council's responsibility and public commitment to adopt and mitigate the reports of climate change. The actions will be undertaken by the Council through its role as an organisation, Community Leader and service provider. The production of a Climate Change Strategy is a key project within the Corporate Plan.

The Sustainable Procurement Policy is vital for the Council to formalise good practice and to provide value for money in its procurement transactions, whilst taking account of environmental and socio-economic benefits and the national targets set out in the National Action Plan Flexible Framework.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.40 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 2008/11

The Corporate Director of Human Resources and Operational Development presented a report which recommended adoption of a Workforce Development Plan for the three year period up to 2011.

The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy identified a 10 year vision for Local Government that aimed to ensure that all Councils had 'high performing, citizen centred, skilled and motivated staff'. The Strategy required local authorities to produce a Workforce Development Plan to clarify how they would anticipate and address both current and future key workforce challenges.

The draft Workforce Development Plan had been compiled to draw on current initiatives and aimed to maximise the authority's human resources assets in order to deliver effective and efficient public services. The Plan contained details of the Authority's present workforce, speculated the requirements to meet future challenges and identified the methods that would be employed to meet the requirements.

The draft Workforce Development Plan had been approved by Executive Member (Resources) for consultation purposes with staff and trade unions and a supplementary report tabled at the meeting confirmed that no responses to the consultation that would warrant a material change to the Plan had been received.

A note circulated at the meeting drew attention to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's suggestion that, in order to keep all other Councillors better informed, Executive Members should provide regular individual portfolio briefings. In response, the Executive Leader reminded Members of the current means of disseminating information to Councillors (eg regular editions of 'In the Know', publication of Executive Cabinet and individual Executive Member decisions), but indicated that other appropriate mechanisms (eg Member Learning Hour sessions, mini briefing sessions) could be considered if there was need to impart information on any future major significant issues.

Decision made:

That the Workforce Development Plan, as now presented, be approved and adopted.

Reasons for decision:

The introduction of a Workforce Development Plan is an essential part of the Council's improved planning by ensuring that the Authority possesses the skills, attitudes and commitment needed within the workforce to deliver the Council's vision.

The Plan is a key project within the Corporate Strategy to support the long-term outcome to provide and procure high quality, priority services.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

08.EC.41 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision made:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

08.EC.42 YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF KEY PARTNERSHIPS

The Executive Cabinet received and considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) reviewing the performance of the Council's key partnership arrangements during 2007/08 against the criteria laid down in the adopted Framework for Partnership Working.

The report, in particular:

- reviewed the financial standing and performance of the Council's key partnerships against the respective targets and objectives for the financial year;
- reviewed the progress achieved against the Management Action Plan contained within the internal audit review of the management of partnerships and contracts;
- updated the Partnership Framework to include Equality and Diversity monitoring, sustainability, data quality, conduct and additional governance issues;
- recommended the addition of 'Supaclean' as a new key partner for the cleaning of the Council's public conveniences over a 5 year contract period, with the option for a further 2 year extension.

The report drew attention to a small number of instances where partnership performance or risk issues had been identified. In particular, reference was made to recent discussions with the operators of the Indoor Leisure contract and the subsequent monitoring arrangements that had been put into place.

In general, however, the report confirmed that the key partnership's observance of best practice and governance arrangements as set out in the Framework document, and good progress in the achievement of the partnerships' goals and objectives.

Decisions made:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the updated Framework for Partnership Working, as now presented, be approved.
3. That the Corporate Director (People) monitors closely and manages the risks arising from the current trading position of Community Leisure Services.

Reason for Decisions:

The report informed Members of the current performance of key partnerships and ensure effective management of the Council's partnership arrangements.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

None.

Executive Leader